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that the talks need to follow in order to be concluded by the end of the year. Though they did little more than issue a timetable based on the series of deadlines Members had already set out in the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration in December 2005, ministers came out of the meeting sounding less pessimistic about the possibilities for a successful round than they had before.

Ministers did nothing in Davos to resolve any of the substantive differences that have deadlocked the talks. Nevertheless, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said that there had been a "change in mindset" during the meeting. In an implicit reference to the 'you first' attitude that characterizes trade negotiations, he suggested that governments had realised that "they have to stop digging their tactical defensive holes."

The timeline has been circulated to the entire WTO Membership as an informal document. It is likely to be discussed at the Trade Negotiations Committee meeting scheduled for 7 February.

Ministers' reaffirmation of the Hong Kong Declaration deadlines does not seem to have allayed much scepticism about their chances of being met, according to sources in Geneva. A January survey of Geneva-based negotiators and capital-based trade officials indicates that only 2 percent of them believe that Members will meet the end-April deadline for a comprehensive agreement on 'full modalities' -- structures and numbers for subsidy and tariff cuts, as well as exceptions -- for the agriculture and non-agriculture market access (NAMA) negotiations.

The poll, conducted by the Institute for International Business, Economics, and Law at the University of Adelaide, revealed that not one of the Geneva-based negotiators surveyed believed that the Doha Round would be wrapped up by the end of this year -- a target to which Member governments insist they remain committed.

Timeline builds on Hong Kong Declaration

The timeline issued in Davos lists some 33 technical issues that Members need to resolve, each with a corresponding deadline. These are not new: every issue is already identified in the Hong Kong Declaration, such as the 30 April 2006 date for

LEAD STORIES

DAVOS: MINISTERS REAFFIRM HONG KONG DEADLINES, AND A BIT MORE

Trade ministers from 25-odd WTO Member countries steered clear of the most divisive issues in the sluggish Doha Round negotiations during a 'mini-ministerial' meeting in Davos, Switzerland from 27-28 January, choosing instead to focus on the schedule and process

establishing modalities for agriculture and NAMA, and the 31 July deadline for submitting comprehensive draft schedules of commitments based on these modalities.

A number of new procedural guidelines for work in 2006 were present in the timetable, all linked to the Hong Kong mandate. Most substantial among these are July dates for the submission for consolidated draft texts on rules (including anti-dumping and fisheries subsidies) as well as the first full draft on trade facilitation. "Working documents" on the dispute settlement understanding (DSU) and intellectual property rights (TRIPS) negotiations are also now expected in July.

According to the timeline, developed country Members would "notify the means by which they will implement the decision" to provide duty- and quota-free access to exports from least-developed countries (LDCs) by September, with developing countries "declaring themselves in a position to do so" to follow suit by December. The Committee for Trade and Development (CTD) would conduct its first Hong Kong-mandated annual review of Members' efforts to provide such market access to LDC exports in November. It also suggests that the May, July, and October General Council meetings focus on the remaining proposals for changes to the special and differential treatment (S&D) provisions of specific WTO agreements -- the Hong Kong Declaration calls for a report on these to be made to the General Council by December 2006.

The Hong Kong Declaration charged the WTO Director-General with creating a 'task force' on aid-for-trade that would provide recommendations to the General Council by July. The timeline provides for this task force to be set up in February; for the Director-General to consult with Members and aid agencies from March to May; for trade, finance, and development ministers to discuss a Doha Round aid-for-trade package at the September annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); and for the aid-for-trade programme to start functioning in December.

The ministers targeted April for the "clarification of parameters" to fulfill the Doha mandate for the expedited liberalisation of trade in environmental goods and services.

With regard to agriculture and NAMA, the timetable reiterated the Hong Kong commitments, and added that the WTO Director-General should report to the General Council on cotton between May and July. In response to concerns about the effect of the erosion of trade preferences by multilateral liberalisation under an eventual Doha Round agreement, it provides for a seminar on such problems to be held in May. Nothing new is added on services.

New mini-ministerial in March?

Ministers from the US, the EU, Australia, Brazil, India, and Japan, now being referred to as the 'G-6' (Group of Six), met with each other prior to the larger gathering. US Trade Representative Rob Portman indicated that the group might meet again in mid-March, and possibly sooner. Bilateral discussions among them are also taking place. For example, Indian Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath met with EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson in London on 1 February to discuss issues including the Doha Round.

Both Portman and Mandelson suggested that ministers in Davos had understood that Members would need to make simultaneous offers on all aspects of the negotiating agenda. Nevertheless, familiar fault lines remained apparent: at a panel discussion soon after the mini-ministerial gathering, Portman, Mandelson, and Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim expressed sharp disagreements over farm tariff cuts and their importance to the negotiations.

ICTSD reporting; "Insiders pessimistic as ministers talk up trade hopes," THE AGE, 31 January 2006; "Trade Ministers See Improved Atmosphere," NEW YORK TIMES, 29 January 2006; "Ministers seek road map to WTO trade deal," REUTERS, 27 January 2006; "India-EU agrees on roadmap on trade, investment issues by Oct," PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, 1 February 2006.

WTO AGRICULTURE WEEK SEES G-10 PROPOSALS, BUT LITTLE PROGRESS

WTO Members made little progress during their first talks on agriculture since the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December. The week of discussions from January 23-26 focused more on procedure than substance. Members generally agreed with agriculture Chair Crawford Falconer's assessment that they should begin developing texts on a number of technical issues that need to be finalised at the end of April as per the deadline for 'full modalities' set out by the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration. Those issues include formulas and figures for reducing farm tariffs and subsidies.

The G-10 -- comprising net food-importing, mainly developed countries, including Switzerland and Japan - released a position paper on domestic support as well as a new proposal for the treatment of 'sensitive' products, which both developing and developed countries would be able to designate for relatively lower tariff cuts. Sensitive products occupied the bulk of discussions; many trade observers believe that an agreement on the issue is an essential first step for an eventual deal on overall modalities.

Falconer outlines process for developing April text

Falconer indicated that he would produce a set of questions for Members well in advance of the next agriculture week, scheduled to start on 13 February. This process appears to be similar to that followed prior to the December Ministerial Conference, when ministers were posed a set of questions about areas of the negotiations that required political guidance. The answers to Falconer's questions will be compiled to develop a text that would in turn serve as the basis for negotiations through April. In addition, he will prepare a list of issues to be addressed during the upcoming agriculture week, in an attempt to produce more focused discussions.

G-10 proposal on sensitive products

Sources report that Falconer held consultations on all three pillars of the agriculture negotiations, i.e., export competition, domestic support, and market access. The consultations on market access had been more constructive, he said, particularly with the discussions on a new proposal from the G-10 on the treatment of sensitive products.

G-10 countries generally have high levels of farm subsidies and import tariffs. The proposal circulated by the group last week had first been unveiled at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, and reiterated the group's "strong objection to the concept of tariff capping for any product." The G-20, the EU, and the US, in comparison, have been calling for tariff caps between 75 percent and 150 percent.

Though it allows Members to slate sensitive products for lower tariff reductions than those negotiated for products at comparable tariff levels, the July 2004 Framework (WT/L/579, available at http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/draft_text_gc_dg_31july04_e.htm), requires them to provide "substantial improvements in market access... for all products." In order to meet this stipulation, the G-10 would have Members compensate for the lower tariff cuts by expanding tariff-rate quotas (TRQs), i.e., by raising the volume of imports eligible for lower tariff rates.

The proposal would set tariff reductions for sensitive products at a to-be-negotiated fraction of the cut for other farm goods in the same tier of the overall tariff reduction formula. It includes a further element of flexibility: Members would be able to make tariff reductions smaller than the already lower level for sensitive products in exchange for expanding TRQs by a correspondingly higher extent -- or vice versa.

The G-10 sets out a methodology for the extent of TRQ expansion, linking it to the proportion of domestic consumption of the product in question that is currently eligible for importation under the low, in-quota tariff. If the current TRQ for the sensitive product is equivalent to less than 5 percent of domestic consumption, it would be doubled. TRQs accounting for 5-10 percent or greater than 10 percent would be increased by progressively lower amounts.

Another flexibility provided for in the paper would let Members designate products not currently subject to TRQs as sensitive, provided that the tariff cut is implemented over a shorter period. It would also let them avail of a longer implementation period in return for making these products subject to the full tariff reduction required by the tiered formula.

Falconer said that the proposal received a generally positive reception from other Members. Sources report that the EU suggested that linking TRQ expansion to domestic consumption would be problematic -- even though this was the practice followed during the Uruguay Round to calculate required increases in market access -- because it would be difficult to disaggregate consumption data to the tariff line level. Instead, it argued for using import volumes to determine TRQ expansion. Several other Members countered that this would not substantially improve market access for commodities in markets where their import levels are currently insignificant. In addition to the G-10, the G-20, the US, and the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters support linking TRQ expansion to products' share in domestic consumption. The EU is said to be meeting bilaterally with a variety of Members to discuss specifics about the designation and treatment of sensitive products.

G-10 position paper on domestic support

The G-10 tabled a new position paper on domestic farm subsidies on January 25, calling for cuts of between 45 to 75 percent in overall trade-distorting support (OTDS). It proposes that the EU slash its ceiling level for OTDS by 75 percent, while Japan and the US do so by 65 percent. Other WTO members -- including all G-10 members except Japan -- would reduce their overall support by 45 percent, with a lower reduction rate for developing countries. In comparison, the G-20 has called for OTDS cuts ranging from 70 to 80 percent; the US, from 31 to 75 percent; and the EU, from 50 to 70 percent.

For reductions to the 'total aggregate measurement of support' (total AMS) or 'amber box' subsidy caps, the G-10 proposes that the EU make reductions of 70 percent; Japan and the US, of 60 percent; and all other countries, of 40 percent. The paper notes that G-10

members with relatively high levels of amber box support (namely Japan, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland) are willing to make additional reductions.

WTO Members calculated their AMS (amber box) levels during the Uruguay Round on the basis of the amount of trade- and production-distorting subsidies they allocated to their farm sectors during the 1986-88 base period. Developed countries were required to cut their AMS levels by 20 percent during the Uruguay Round's 1995-2000 implementation period. However, in most cases Members' ceiling AMS levels were sufficiently high that this did not force real reductions in the amounts they were actually spending.

The G-10 proposes that Members cap product-specific AMS at the average of actual spending levels notified for the product in question between 1995-2000, excluding the highest and lowest annual spending levels from the calculation. Countries with very low or no product-specific support during this period would have limits fixed as a to-be-negotiated percentage of the value of production of each commodity.

With regard to special and differential treatment, the G-10 proposes that developing countries be allowed to make lower cuts (when applicable) to overall and amber box support, over longer periods of time.

On the 'blue box' (partially decoupled payments under production-limiting programmes), the proposal says that existing criteria spelled out in the July 2004 Framework are adequate. The G-10 proposes that the issues related to any additional blue box criteria require further technical work immediately to develop appropriate disciplines. It also calls for "substantial reductions" to 'de minimis' support -- the maximum level of exempted trade-distorting subsidisation -- which is currently at 5 percent of the value of total farm production in developed countries.

Finally, the G-10 rules out any new disciplines that would cap 'green box' support (domestic support exempt from reduction commitments), or change its character.

Notably, the G-10 proposal calls on WTO members to cut their OTDS levels -- amber box, blue box, and de minimis spending together -- by a percentage amount greater than the cuts foreseen for amber box support alone. This aims to prevent countries from engaging in 'box-shifting,' i.e., reclassifying subsidies in different boxes so as to avoid having to cut them. The Hong Kong Declaration requires Members to make the applicable reduction in OTDS even if the sum of the reductions in amber box, de minimis and blue box payments "would otherwise be less than that overall reduction." The US and EU proposals on domestic

support, on the other hand, provide for OTDS to be cut by lower percentage amounts than AMS.

Hong Kong timeframe reaffirmed in Davos

At a 27-28 January 'mini-ministerial' meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland, trade ministers from some 25-odd WTO Member governments reaffirmed the series of deadlines for the negotiations set out in the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, including the 30 April deadline for full modalities on agriculture.

ICTSD reporting; "G-10 alliance proposes reductions in farm subsidies of 45-75 percent", WTO REPORTER, 26 January 2006; "WTO ag talks make little progress in Geneva, with focus on procedures", WTO REPORTER, 27 January 2006.

OTHER NEWS

WHO ADDRESSES TRADE, HEALTH, IP, AND INNOVATION

Issues related to trade, research and development, and intellectual property rights featured on the agenda during the 23-27 January meeting of the Executive Board (EB) of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva. All three were forwarded to the World Health Assembly, the organisation's principal decision-making body, which is scheduled to meet there from 22-27 May.

The EB, whose rotating membership comprises persons technically qualified in the field of health designated by the 32 WHO member governments elected to three-year terms, determines the agenda of the World Health Assembly. Although only 32 countries at a time are represented on the EB, non-members of the EB are allowed to participate and intervene during the meeting. Similarly, NGOs that have been accredited to the WHO are also allowed to make statements.

Proposal for Resolution on International Trade and Health Approved

The EB swiftly approved a resolution on 'International Trade and Health' (EB117.R5), following up on a draft tabled at last year's EB meeting by Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Nepal, Sudan, Thailand, Tonga and Viet Nam last year (see BRIDGES Weekly, 1 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-06-01/inbrief.htm#2>).

The resolution emphasises the need for more information on the implications of international trade and related agreements for public health, as well as greater policy coherence between trade and health policy. To facilitate this process, the resolution urges governments to promote dialogues on the interlinkages between trade and health, and to adopt policies that address the issues identified.

According to a WHO official, this draft resolution is an important step for creating greater policy coherence between trade and health policy, as it provides public health officials with support for engaging further with trade policy-making processes than has generally been the case.

The resolution will now be tabled for consideration at the upcoming WHA.

CIPIH Report Delayed

In February 2004, the Director-General of the WHO created a Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health (CIPIH) in response to members' concerns. Its mandate was to "collect data and proposals from the different actors involved and produce an analysis of intellectual property rights, innovation, and public health." It was to pay particular emphasis to funding mechanisms and incentives for developing new medicines for diseases that primarily affect developing countries.

The CIPIH's members, chaired by former Swiss President Ruth Dreifuss, were supposed to come to an agreement on the text of the report in time for this year's EB meeting. However, during the gathering, Dreifuss announced that the report's release would be delayed. The WHO secretariat explained that the delay was due to an additional meeting in mid-January "to refine [the report's] recommendations. The CIPIH was able to finalise the text at the additional meeting, which took place on 16-17 January. The redrafted document has now been circulated to the commission members, and is expected to be finalised and translated into six languages by the end of March or beginning of April, in time to be presented to the WHA in May. Once adopted by the independent CIPIH, the report will not be subject to further changes by the WHA. A sub-group of the EB, however, will review it and provide an additional report to the WHA.

In a parallel development, the very integrity of the much-awaited report was called into question when Intellectual Property Watch, a Geneva-based independent news service, alleged that the report had been leaked in autumn 2005 to Eric Noehrenberg of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations in Geneva, who had

subsequently made comments on it in electronic format. Noehrenberg, however, denies having seen the text or commented on it.

A new framework for essential health R&D

In the final hours of the gathering, the EB agreed to send a draft resolution for a 'Global Framework on Essential Health Research and Development' (EB117/Conf. Paper. 3), originally proposed by Kenya and Brazil, to the WHA for its consideration. The resolution urges member states to make global health and medicines a priority in research and development, particularly with regard to the needs of patients in poor countries.

Although the resolution was approved by the EB, approximately half of its text remains in brackets, i.e., not finalised, and will be considered by the WHO's 192 members at the WHA. Nevertheless, health activists hail the development as a success.

The text calls on the Director-General "...to establish a working group of interested member states to consider proposals to [establish a global framework for supporting] needs-driven research..." and urges them "...[to encourage that bilateral trade agreements take into account the flexibilities contained in the WTO TRIPS Agreement and recognized by the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health]." The draft resolution contains bracketed text providing for the working group to make a first report at the 2007 WHA, with a final report at the WHA of the following year. The report is charged with proposing "[alternative simplified systems for the protection of intellectual property, with a view to enhance accessibility to health innovations and building capacity for product development uptake and delivery in developed and developing countries...]."

While the resolution recognizes "[...the promise of new, open models for the development of medical science, enhanced participation in, and access to, scientific advances, and increased knowledge...]" it also recognises "...that intellectual property rights are one of several important tools to promote innovation, creativity, and the transfer of technology."

Several countries expressed support for the initiative, including Bolivia, Lesotho, Bhutan, Sudan, Guinea Bissau, and Thailand, as did many civil society organisations and other concerned individuals. Notably, Sir John Sulston, a Nobel laureate in medicine, read out a public statement by more than 200 scientists who supported the proposal and expressed their concern about the current mechanisms to improve public health globally "...at a time of huge progress in basic science

and more money being spent on biomedical research and development than ever."

ICTSD reporting; "Intellectual property rights, innovation and public health," REPORT BY THE WHO SECRETARIAT (EB117/9), 22 December 2005; "WHO IP Commission Seeks To Overcome Leak Of Report To Industry," INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY WATCH, 23 January 2006; "R&D resolution, with brackets, to be transmitted to WHA," SOUTH-NORTH DEVELOPMENT MONITOR, 29 January 2006; "WHO to decide on medical R&D," FINANCIAL TIMES, 30 January 2006; "WHO Board Wrestles With IP And Public Health Report, R&D Proposal," INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY WATCH, 27 January 2006.

AGREEMENT REACHED ON NEW TROPICAL TIMBER TRADE PACT

Representatives from over 180 governments and international organisations reached consensus on a successor pact to the 1994 International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) on 27 January, following two weeks of intensive negotiations in Geneva. The new commodities agreement aims to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in legally harvested tropical timber from sustainably managed forests, as well as to encourage the sustainable management of such forests. Like its predecessor, the new treaty was negotiated under the auspices of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Once ratified, it will replace the 1994 pact, which will expire at the end of 2006.

Delegates expressed relief that both consuming and producing members of the 1994 pact were able to reach agreement based upon the four rounds of talks that have been held since 2003. They said that both sides were able to overcome their differences thanks to a spirit of good faith as well as concessions made in the last days of the talks on the scope of and funding for the new agreement.

Commodities agreement and/or MEA?

On the question of the scope of the new pact, references to ecological services, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and certification and voluntary market-based mechanisms proved particularly contentious.

The preamble of the final agreement recognises "the importance of the multiple economic, environmental and social benefits provided by forests, including timber and non-timber forest products and environmental services." References to certification and market-based mechanisms were removed due to concerns largely

from timber-producing countries that this could infringe on national sovereignty and also possibly affect their obligations under other trade agreements such as the WTO. However, the agreement does encourage information sharing for voluntary mechanisms such as certification, despite comments from India, Malaysia and Brazil that this assistance must not prejudice ITTA members' rights under trade agreements.

The new agreement also aims to contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation; improve information sharing on timber trade; promote increased processing of sustainably-harvested tropical timber in the countries where it is grown; improve the marketing and distribution of tropical timber; encourage members to develop national policies aimed at the sustainable use and conservation of forests and their genetic resources; strengthen capacity for forest law enforcement and governance and to address illegal logging and related trade; promote understanding of NTFPs; and recognise the role of forest-dependent indigenous and local communities.

Financing as the key question

Some of the most controversial issues in the talks centred upon financing for the new accord and what proportions of the necessary funding should come from producers -- primarily developing countries -- and consumers.

A significant proportion of the impact of the ITTA is felt through project funding. Such grants -- authorised by the International Tropical Timber Council, the treaty's governing body, and administered by its secretariat, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) -- have been falling steadily since the early 1990s. During the negotiations, demands from developing-country timber producers for increased funding clashed with a range of different offers from developed countries. In the last hours of 27 January, however, the EU and producer countries were able to resolve their differences over the proposed funding structure.

IGOs applaud the deal, NGOs noticeably absent

"The agreement establishes a framework for cooperation between exporters and importers," said Manuel Sobral, executive director of the International Tropical Timber Organisation. Lakshmi Puri, the head of UNCTAD's Division on Trade in Goods, Services, and Commodities, reaffirmed the importance of the pact as the only internationally-negotiated agreement on forests. However, environmental groups have been noticeably absent from talks, with many of them choosing to turn their backs on the ITTA and the UN Forum on Forests in favour of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU-sponsored Forest Law

Enforcement, Governance and Trade processes, which also seek to combat illegal trade in timber.

The treaty provides for a complex division of voting power among the 33 producing and 26 consuming countries that are members of ITTA-1994. Each of the two blocs is assigned 1000 votes. These are divided among producer countries on the basis of regional distribution, each country's relative share of tropical forest resources, and timber export volumes. Consumer countries' voting power is linked to their imports of tropical timber. Governments will be able to sign onto the new pact as of 3 April. It will enter into force once it is signed or ratified by 12 producer governments accounting for 60 percent of their votes, and 10 consumer governments accounting for 60 percent of tropical timber imports in 2005.

For daily reporting, see IISD linkages <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/itta4/>.

For previous news coverage of ITTA and other forestry developments, visit <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/ictsd/news/forestwater.htm>.

For relevant resources, visit http://www.trade-environment.org/page/theme/nat_res/forest.htm.

For relevant links, visit <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/links/forests.htm>.

ICTSD reporting; EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN Vol. 24 No. 65-75, 16-27 January.

IN BRIEF

KOREA LOWERS SCREEN QUOTAS, FTA TALKS WITH US TO FOLLOW?

Korea announced on 26 January that it would halve its domestic screen quota, placing the launch of bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) talks with the US one step closer to becoming a reality.

The possibility of FTA negotiations between the two countries has been mentioned repeatedly for several years. However, disagreements over thorny issues such as Korea's protection of its domestic film industry have been standing in the way of getting talks underway.

Since 1966, Korean movie theatres have been required to show home-grown films 146 days per year. By

halving this to 73, Seoul appears to be sending a message to Washington that it is eager to begin negotiating.

The US has long insisted that Korea's screen quota system is a direct impediment to advancing trade talks. In November 2004, the US' ambassador to Korea, Christopher Hill, said that Korea had to choose between the screen quota system and an FTA with the US.

As required by domestic law, Korea has scheduled a 2 February 2006 public hearing to discuss the potential FTA negotiations. The hearing, which must take place at least two weeks before the country initiates any trade talks, is expected to attract strong opposition from film and agriculture representatives.

The timing of the hearing has led to widespread speculation that formal FTA talks will begin in early February, which could coincide with a visit to Washington by Korean Trade Minister Kim Hyun Chong, scheduled to occur in the upcoming weeks.

Media sources are speculating that both Korea and the US are anxious to get negotiations underway in order to beat the 30 June 2007 deadline which will end the Bush Administration's ability to "fast-track" trade deals through Congress.

The screen quota reduction is expected to take effect on 1 July.

Korea-US FTA Talks to Start in May," KOREA TIMES, 27 January 2006; "[An Asia Pacific Millennium] Screen Quota for Indie Films?", THE KOREA TIMES, 30 January 2006; "Korea, U.S. Poised to Announce FTA Talks as Korea Opens Film Market," INSIDE US TRADE, 27 January 2006; "FTA Talks With Washington Need Firm Leadership," CHOSUNLIBO, 27 January 2006; "Korea must choose between FTA and screen quota: US Ambassador," DIGITAL CHOSUN, 1 November 2004.

WTO IN BRIEF

WTO BIOTECH PANEL REPORT DELAYED YET AGAIN

A WTO dispute panel has once again postponed the release of its preliminary report on the case brought by the US, Canada and Argentina against what they allege was an EU moratorium on the approval of new biotech products. On 30 January, panel Chair Christian

Haerberli told the countries involved that the 1 February delivery date would not be met. Instead, trade sources suggest that the interim report, which will only be distributed to the parties to the dispute, will be released on 7 February. The final ruling in the case had originally been scheduled for March 2005, but has been postponed several times.

The report is believed likely to contain several hundred pages of analysis, possibly amounting to the longest such document in WTO history (see BRIDGES Weekly, 18 January 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-01-18/story2.htm>).

The US, Canada and Argentina brought the complaint to the WTO in May 2003, accusing the EU of maintaining a 'de facto' moratorium on approvals of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that, along with a number of sub-regional bans, was in compliance with WTO law. Although the EU has, since 2004, approved seven biotech crops for food, feed or processing use, a US official told reporters on 26 January that "we don't agree that the moratorium has ended." However, an EU official has noted that the results of the challenge are unlikely to change legislation or the approval process in the trade bloc and reaffirmed that they would "continue to deal [with applications] on a case-by-case basis on their own merits."

ICTSD reporting; "EU prepares for bruising WTO ruling in biotech case," REUTERS, 18 January 2006; "WTO Report in GMO Case Against EU Expected Feb. 1 Will Be Longest Ever," WTO REPORTER, 27 January 2006; "WTO Ruling on U.S. vs. EU GMO Foods Dispute Due Out February 1," AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 27 January 2006; "WTO delays ruling in GMO dispute until next week," REUTERS, 30 January 2006.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/cal/index.htm>. If you would like to submit an event, please email events@ictsd.ch.

Upcoming Events: 2 February - 8 February

2-4 February 2006, New Delhi, India: DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (DSDS) 2006: DRIVING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND STIMULATING ACTION. The DSDS 2006, organised

annually by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), will place an emphasis on linkages across the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The event hopes to facilitate the formation of such linkages by exploring opportunities for partnerships among governments, communities, organisations, and emerging technological breakthroughs. For further information contact Vishal Narain, tel: (+91) 11-2468-2100; fax: (+91) 11-2468-2144; e-mail: vishaln@teri.res.in; internet: <http://static.teriin.org/dsds/2006/index.htm>.

3 February, Munich, Germany: ASIA PACIFIC FINANCE CONFERENCE. This event, organised by the Asia-Pacific Committee (APA) of Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (BDI), the largest business association in Germany, in cooperation with the World Bank Group, will discuss issues such as financing infrastructure in Asia, market access for financial services and research and development. A registration fee is required for this event. For further information contact Eckart von Unger, tel: (+49) 30-2028-1633; fax: (+49) 30-2028-2633, email: e.unger@bdi-online.de, internet: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/0,,contentMDK:20775723~menuPK:208943~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:226301,00.html>.

6-7 February, London, England: THE WTO AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: PROSPECTS AFTER HONG KONG. This conference, organised by Chatham House in partnership with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), will address the question: what does the outcome of the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference mean for sustainable development? For further information contact Dino Ribeiro, tel: (+44) 20-7957-5753; fax: (+44) 20-7321-2045; e-mail: dribeiro@chathamhouse.org.uk; or Fraser Mcgruer, e-mail: FMcgruer@chathamhouse.org.uk; internet: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/index.php?id=5&cid=67>.

6-10 February 2006, Geneva, Switzerland: COMMISSION ON TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES AND COMMODITIES, 10th session. During this UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) meeting, the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities will discuss topics such as UNCTAD's Trade and Development Index, the developmental implications of commodities production and trade, trade in services, market access, and competitiveness. For further information contact UNCTAD, tel: (+41) 22-917-5809; fax: (+41) 22-917-0056; email: meetings@unctad.org, internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/meeting.asp?intItemD=1942&lang=1&m=11147&info=highlights>.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf.

Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

2-3 February: NON-AGRICULTURAL MARKET ACCESS (NAMA) DAYS

2 February: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

3 February: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - ISRAEL

3 February: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES

3 February: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON MARKET ACCESS

6-17 February: SERVICES WEEKS

6 February: WORKING PARTY ON DOMESTIC REGULATION

6 February: COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

7 February: COMMITTEE ON TRADE IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

7 February: TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

8 February: COMMITTEE ON SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS

8 February: GENERAL COUNCIL

Other Upcoming Events

10 February, Washington, DC: THE OECD ASSESSMENT OF THE HONG KONG TALKS. This Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) breakfast meeting will feature a presentation by Jean-Marie Metzger, Director of the OECD Trade Directorate, on the consequences of the WTO Ministerial Conference in December. Free online registration is required for this event. For further information contact the OECD, tel: (+1) 202-785-6323; fax: (+1) 202-785-0350; e-mail: washington.contact@oecd.org; internet:

<http://www.oecdwash.org/NEWS/EVENTS/EVENTS2006/feb10-2006.htm>

7-10 March, Porto Alegre, Brazil: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. This meeting will primarily serve to review different experiences with agrarian reform and rural development processes around the world by analysing impacts, processes, mechanisms, and the actors involved, in order to develop proposals for future action. Jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Brazil. For further information contact the ICARRD Secretariat, e-mail: icarrd-secretariat@fao.org; internet: <http://www.icarrd.org>.

13-31 March, Singapore: DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE FOR THE ADOPTION OF A REVISED TRADEMARK LAW TREATY. This conference, organised by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), will discuss the adoption of a revised Trademark Law Treaty. All WIPO Member states are invited to be represented by a delegation. States that are not members of WIPO but are members of the United Nations will be invited to participate as observers, as well as all organisations having permanent observer status with the WIPO Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT). For further information contact WIPO, tel: (+41) 22-338-9111; internet: <http://www.wipo.int/meetings/2006/tlt-singapore/en/>.

27-30 March 2006, Brasilia, Brazil: OECD HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON "BETTER FINANCING FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMEs." This conference, organised by the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development's Working Party on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and Entrepreneurship (WPSME), will discuss solutions and/or initiatives for facilitating SME access to financing from creation to all stages of development. For further information contact the OECD, tel: (+33) 1-45-24-82-00; fax: (+33) 1-45-24-85-00; internet: http://www.oecd.org/document/30/0,2340,en_2649_344_87_35898590_1_1_1_1,00.html.

RESOURCES

NEGOTIATING HEALTH: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND ACCESS TO MEDICINES. Edited by Pedro Roffe, Geoff Tansey and David Vivas-Eugui. International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and Earthscan, 2006. In developing countries, access to affordable medicines for the treatment of diseases such as AIDS and malaria remains a matter of life or death. In Africa, for instance,

more than one million children die each year from malaria alone, a figure that could soon rise with the extension of patent rules to pharmaceuticals. Previously, access to essential medicines was made possible by the supply of much cheaper generics, manufactured largely by India; from 2005, however, the availability of these drugs has been threatened as new WTO rules take effect. Halting the spread of malaria and HIV/AIDS is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. These studies by leading authorities from all over the world on the subject of intellectual property and health provides informed analysis on the post-2005 world and discusses how action may be taken to ensure that intellectual property regimes are interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of the right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all. Further information can be found at <http://shop.earthscan.co.uk/ProductDetails/mcs/productID/669>.

"Trade and Human Rights: Towards Coherence," By Caroline Dommen. SUR - INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON HUMAN RIGHTS, No. 3, 2005. This article focuses on ways that human rights advocates can ensure that trade and trade rules promote, rather than undermine, human rights. The article concludes that an effective way to achieve respect for human rights in international trade policy is through engaging with trade policy-makers from national governments, and demonstrating the positive role a human rights perspective can play in ensuring a fair and democratic international trading system. The article points out that human rights defenders share concerns about trade with development groups, women's rights advocates, environmentalists and others already working on trade, and suggests that human rights advocates demonstrate, through applying the relevant accountability mechanisms, how they can make a positive contribution to making trade more equitable and human rights-friendly. Available online at <http://www.surjournal.org/eng/?PHPSESSID=187466b09768b73d065b315ed475d412>.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MULTILATERAL TRADE COOPERATION. Edited by Bernard M. Hoekman and Simon J. Evenett. Palgrave Macmillan and the World Bank, December 2005. How can international trade agreements promote development and how can rules be designed to benefit poor countries? Can multilateral trade cooperation in the WTO help developing countries create and strengthen institutions and regulatory regimes that will enhance the gains from trade and integration into the global economy? And should this even be done? This book analyses how the current global trading system could be made more supportive of economic development, without eroding the core WTO functions. It brings

together current thinking by leading practitioners and analysts of the WTO to show how the Doha negotiating agenda could help to increase the development relevance of the WTO. Further information can be found at http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=4521403.

CHALLENGING PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT TRADE IN SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS: TOWARDS WIN-WIN FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. By Nicola Borregaard and Annie Dufey. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) Sustainable Markets Discussion Paper Number 1, November 2005. Sustainable products -- products that provide greater positive or lower negative social, environmental and economic impacts along the value chain than conventional products -- have the potential to contribute to sustainable development in developing countries. But at present there are many factors impeding the growth of markets for these products in developing countries. For example, at the national level there is a lack of market information, while at the international level, ecolabelling requirements impose financial burdens on small-scale producers. This paper aims to bring some fresh perspectives to the debate on international trade, sustainable products, ecolabelling, and production and process methods, with a view to helping developing country governments draw up suitable policies to support sustainable products. Further information can be found at <http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?n=2&l=62&c=trade&x=Y>.

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